

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

March 25, 1972

SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: AL HAIG  
SUBJECT: Military Uprising in El Salvador

Early Saturday morning a military officer announced on commercial radio that a revolutionary junta headed by Col. Benjamin Mejia, Commander of the Artillery Brigade, had taken control of the government and held President Sanchez in custody. He said the junta will dismiss the legislature and supreme court and will exercise all power.

Our Embassy reports that the Air Force and the National Guard have not yet thrown in with the junta, which has threatened to move against Air Force headquarters. Meanwhile, an Air Force plane has dropped several bombs on the First Army Brigade headquarters, which is supporting the junta.

Nonetheless, traffic in the city is reportedly moving normally and only occasional small arms fire is reported in the city. The reasons for the unexpected take-over are not clear. It could be related to dissatisfaction stemming from the recent presidential election in which the government candidate defeated the leftist coalition candidate by a small margin (and probably fraudulently). It could also be related to recent government crack-downs on its opposition.

[REDACTED] Col. Mejia himself has been judged "friendly to the US" in the past.

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